

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Customer Feedback Report</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>27 September 2016</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Lead Officer - Strategy Governance &amp; Law</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Brian Foley</b>	<b>Tel: 29-3109</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 To provide assurance to the Committee that the Council has an effective Customer Feedback system which is able to ensure that:
- Complaints from members of the public are dealt with promptly and efficiently.
  - Appropriate performance targets are set and monitored to ensure there is continued improvement in the way customer and service user dissatisfaction is dealt with.
  - Where corrective action is required this is addressed.
  - Analysis of complaints and compliments are used to improve the way services are provided.
- 1.2 To provide assurance that any major areas of concern of themes that might require further investigation are being considered.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report.
- 2.2 That the Committee should receive a similar report four times a year.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Customer Feedback is important to the Council. The feedback we receive from customers and service users about what disappoints or delights them provides insight on what members of the public value and can inform decisions on where improvements should be made.
- 3.2 A failure to deal with complaints promptly and effectively can affect levels of customer satisfaction and present a level of risk to organisational reputation. The

Customer Feedback Team are working with key services to promote and improve the way customer dissatisfaction is dealt with.

- 3.3 The information within the Appendix to this report is taken from the council's performance reporting system and has been previously shared with the Executive Leadership Team's Performance Board.
- 3.4 The following set of Key Performance Indicators are used to measure Customer Feedback.
- Number of Stage One complaints received
  - Number of Stage One complaints upheld
  - Number of Stage Two complaints upheld
  - Number of Ombudsman complaints upheld
  - Number of compliments

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Results for the full year 2015/16 showed a 20% decrease in Stage One complaints and an increase of 20% in compliments received. Numerically, complaints reduced from 1957 to 1567 and compliments increased from 648 to 781.
- 4.2 We have set a target for a further 5% reduction in complaints throughout 2016/17 which is 373 in each quarter. In Quarter One the result was 460. Stage One complaints can be reduced by addressing the underlying issues that give rise to customer dissatisfaction and by giving front line teams the means to resolve issues at first point of contact.
- 4.3 The areas which had the greatest impact on complaint levels and where further work is required following the Q1 results are:
- CityClean where complaints caused by problems in communication between the operations team and contact centre is being addressed through the introduction of mobile technology.
  - Parking where two contentious schemes have recently been implemented which have generated a large amount of public opinion/correspondence causing a rise in complaints.
  - Housing Services where it is recognised there is a need to work on how to reduce the number of issues going to complaint. The service is under review and changes that are implemented should reduce the number of complaints.
  - Repairs and Maintenance where actions have been taken to improve the flow of multi-trade works and to check on outstanding jobs each morning. Improvements are being made to the management of planned programme of works. The repairs handbook is being revised to give more information to residents.
- 4.4 This demonstrates that services are recognising the issues that give rise to complaints and are seeking to improve the services they provide.
- 4.5 The average time taken to respond to complaints has increased from 12 working days to 13 working days and is outside the target figure of 10 working days.

- 4.6 The Customer Feedback Team produce a weekly chase up list for members of the Corporate Management Team. The Directors for the areas where there are the most significant delays in providing replies during Q1, that is Development Control, Housing and CityClean have given their assurances this is being dealt with.
- 4.7 The proportion of complaints upheld at Stage One is an indicator of how well teams are resolving dissatisfaction at point of contact. If a matter becomes a formal complaint and is upheld we question why it was not possible to resolve it without recourse to the complaints process.
- 4.8 We have seen the proportion of upheld formal complaints steadily reduce from 39% in 2014/15 to the current target of 28% for Q1 2016/17.
- 4.9 Stage Two complaints are investigated by the Customer Feedback Managers who are independent of services. A low percentage of upheld or partially upheld results at Stage Two is interpreted as showing that on the whole service managers carrying out Stage One investigations have reached a fair and reasonable decision.
- 4.10 The result for 2015/16 was 22%.The target result for 2016/17 Stage 2 complaints upheld or partially upheld is 15%.
- 4.11 In Q1 there have been 54 Stage Two complaints and the result to date has been 8%, the direction of travel is therefore positive, there are six cases not yet concluded.
- 4.12 The LGO's Annual Review of Local Government Complaints shows that nationally it upheld 51% of detailed investigations in 2015/16, up from 46% the previous year.
- 4.13 Over the three year period 2013-16 the percentage of cases where the Ombudsman upheld complaints against this Council has consistently decreased from 31% to 22%.
- 4.14 The Council's target result for 2016/17 of 20% aims for continued improvement in resolving complaints before they are referred to the Ombudsman.
- 4.15 In Q1 there have been 12 Ombudsman complaints with one case upheld giving a result to date of 8.3% which is very positive.
- 4.16 The number of compliments recorded continues to increase and at 213 compliments in Q1 were two (2) short of the targeted 10% improvement. Areas which have recorded the greatest improvement in compliments received are CityClean and Children's Social Care.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The information in the report is derived from feedback received directly from members of the public. The results obtained have been shared with senior officers in the services referred to and their comments have been incorporated.

## 6. CONCLUSION

6.1 We are able to assure the Committee that:

- Complaints are being dealt with efficiently as can be seen from the reducing levels of cases which are upheld. The concerns about the timeliness of responses have been addressed with Directors and corrective action is being taken.
- Performance targets have been set, are regularly monitored and reported to the Council's Executive Performance Board.
- Services take account of the customer feedback they receive and have identified ways to improve their performance and the services they offer.
- The Customer Feedback process is robust and is able to identify when and where any major areas of concern arise and can bring this to the attention of relevant senior officers to act upon.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

7.1 The costs of Customer Feedback in terms of administration and compensation awards (where appropriate) are met within existing allocated budgets.

*Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld*

*Date: 19/08/16*

### Legal Implications:

7.2 The Council follows statutory complaints procedures for complaints about Adult's and Children's Social Care and a corporate complaints procedure under which complaints about council services are dealt with.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 19/08/2016*

### Equalities Implications:

7.3 There are no direct Equalities implications.

### Sustainability Implications:

7.4 There are no direct Sustainability implications.

### Any Other Significant Implications:

7.5 There are no other significant implications.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

#### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

#### **Background Documents**

1. None

## Appendix 1: Number of Stage One complaints received

### Position:

- 1.1 This information relates to complaints from members of the public about all services delivered by the Council including statutory Adult Social Care, Children Social Care and Corporate Complaints.
- 1.2 The target for 2016/17 is to drive continuous improvement with a 5% reduction on the result of the preceding twelve months. The annual result for 2015/16 was 1567, the green target is 1490. The result for Q1 (March to May) was 460, and so has a Red rating. The direction of travel is declining.
- 1.3 The number of complaints received in the quarter; the target achieved including direction of travel; and main issues of complaint for the key services that we monitor were:

#### Economy, Environment & Culture

- Cityclean = 108 (Red/Declining); Failure to provide bins, recycling
- Development Control = 14 (Green/Improving); Disagree with decision
- Highways = 15 (Green/Improving); Road Safety, Poor quality of service
- Parking = 49 (Red/Declining); Consultation, PCN administration
- Sport & Leisure = 5 (Green/Improving); Disagree with decision
- Tourism & Venues = 0 (Green)

#### Families, Children & Learning

- Childrens Social Care = 15 (Green/Improving); Unhappy with SW, Not supporting parent
- Education & Skills = 4 (Red/Declining); Public consultation, Unhappy with decision
- Health & Disability = 2 (Green/Improving); Delay, Unhappy with decision

#### Finance & Resources

- Revenues & Benefits = 44 (Red/Declining); Legal Action, Administrative errors

#### Health & Adult Social Care

- ASC Assessment = 23 (Red /Declining); Not suitably informed about contributions to care
- ASC Provider = 9 (Red/Declining); Rudeness of care providers

#### Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing

- Housing Needs = 25 (Green/Improving); Banding, Standard of accommodation
- Housing Services = 35 (Red/Declining); Staff conduct, Cleaning not done
- Repairs & Maintenance = 74 (Red/Declining); Delay completing repair, Communication
- Regulatory Services = 8 (Red/Declining); Failure to take action, disagree with decision

#### Strategy, Governance & Law

- Life Events = 6 (Red/Declining); Electoral service
- 1.4 Few other local authorities provide their annual complaints data and where they do the corporate complaints processes used often differ so that direct comparisons are not easily made.
  - 1.5 For 2015/16 the average response time to corporate complaints was 12 working days against the target of 10 working days. 67% of replies were sent within 10 working days, 12% took longer than 20 working days.
  - 1.6 In Quarter One 2016/17 the average response time to corporate complaints at the time of reporting is 13 working days. 61% of replies were sent within 10 working days, 17% have taken longer than 20 working days. There are 14 complaints yet to be replied to and the results of these cases will change the Q1 result.
  - 1.7 The Customer Feedback Team issues weekly reminders to all members of CMT which show what complaints have not been replied to.

**Commentary:**

- 1.8 The Customer Feedback Team review the results with all major teams. There have been increasing levels of complaints in Q1 across eleven of the eighteen services reviewed. The biggest proportional increases in complaints have been in:
  - Cityclean, who are aware that complaints are caused by problems in communication between the operations team and contact centre. Mobile technology is being trialled in Oct/Nov 2016 and this will enable a quicker response to reported problems and is expected to reduce the current level of complaints.
  - Parking, where every year 2-3 new parking schemes are being consulted on or introduced. Two contentious schemes have recently been implemented and have generated a large amount of public opinion/correspondence causing a rise in complaints. There is a full timetable for this work over the next 5 years so these issues are likely to be a regular theme which can periodically affect quarterly results. The introduction of online permit processing may reduce the levels of complaint.
  - Housing Services where it is recognised there is a need to work on how to reduce the number of issues going to complaint. The service is under review and changes that are implemented should reduce the number of complaints. These will be achieved by maintaining a focus on resolving 80% of issues at point of contact and introducing Area Based Teams rather than separate Neighbourhood and Tenancy Enforcement Teams.
  - Repairs and Maintenance where a range of actions have been taken to improve the flow of multi-trade works and to check on outstanding jobs each morning. Council surveyors are now managing the planned programme of works where previously this was done by the contractor. It is recognised that the analysis of repairs is currently poor and that by March 2017 Business & Performance Manager will have introduced a system to achieve this. The repairs handbook is being updated by Customer Service Manager by March 2017, it will give more information about issues like condensation so residents can understand how to improve things for themselves.

- 1.9 Children's Social Care complaints have reduced consistently; this is mainly as a result of the introduction of a new delivery model.

**Actions:**

- 1.10 The Modernisation Project will enable refuse crews to give live information to the Contact Centre and customers about missed collections which will enable quicker responses and fewer complaints. Action Date: October/November 2016. Action Lead: Waste Contracts & Projects Manager
- 1.11 Reorganisation of Housing Services to lead to fewer complaints, consultation reaching completion, implementation to follow. Action Date: October 2016. Action Lead: Assistant Director – Housing
- 1.12 Implementation of system to create better understanding of repair requirements to housing stock to be implemented. Action Date: March 2017. Action Lead: Business & Performance Manager.
- 1.13 Revised tenant repairs handbook. Action Date: March 2017. Action Lead: Customer Service Manager.
- 1.14 All overdue complaints are made known to senior managers in a weekly publicised list. Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead
- 1.15 Quarterly meetings with heads of service to review complaints performance. Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Feedback Managers



## Appendix 2: Number of Stage One complaints upheld

### Position:

- 1.1 Teams should endeavour to avoid issues of dissatisfaction becoming formal complaints by resolving the matter with customers when they are first raised. This is good customer service.
- 1.2 The average percentage of complaints upheld or partially upheld over the two year period 2013/14 and 2014/15 was 39% across all services. The result for the year 2015/16 was 31.0% (468/1567). For 2016/17 a target of 28% represents a 10% improvement.
- 1.3 For 2016/17 Q1 there have been 446 completed Stage One complaints of which 124 have been upheld or partially upheld. This equates to a figure of 28%, this result has a Green rating.
- 1.4 There is no comparator information available from other authorities.

### Commentary:

- 1.5 We have complaints data about all service teams but more closely monitor and report on the activity of a group of services who have a high profile or significant levels of complaint.
- 1.6 Services with higher than the target level of upheld or partially upheld complaints and where the trend was not improving in Q1 were:
  - Housing Repairs & Maintenance: In Q1 there were 74 complaints of which 39 were upheld (=53%) compared to 2015/16 where there were 208 complaints of which 89 were upheld (=43%). The service recognise there is a communication issue which is causing complaints in that residents are not being kept informed of progress and their expectations are not well managed resulting in increasing numbers of upheld complaints.
  - Sports & Leisure: In Q1 there were 5 complaints of which 3 were upheld (=60%) compared to 23 complaints in 2015/16 where 3 complaints were upheld (=13%). The service receives very few formal complaints and there has been no single theme connecting those upheld in Q1. The service works closely with contractors and event organisers to resolve dissatisfaction before they become formal complaints, for example there was only one complaint about the Prince Regent when it had to be closed.

### Actions:

- 1.7 Housing Repairs & Maintenance: Recognise the need to improve communications. Meeting between partnership senior managers to consider the new processes in place to deal with the work flow of multi trade works and how communications with customers will be carried out. (Action Date: October 2016. Action Lead: Business & Performance Manager)

- 1.8 Housing Repairs & Maintenance: To remove the practice of closing job numbers and starting another before a piece of work is actually completed which can cause momentum to be lost in completing work and give rise to complaints from customers. (Action Date: October 2016. Action Lead: Business & Performance Manager)
- 1.9 Sports & Leisure: To continue to work closely with contractors and event organisers to resolve matters of dissatisfaction to prevent customers feeling they should need to raise matters as a formal complaint. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Head of Sport & Leisure)

## Appendix 3: Number of Stage Two complaints upheld

### Position:

- 1.1 Stage 2 complaints are investigated by the Customer Feedback Managers who are independent of services. A low percentage of upheld or partially upheld results at Stage 2 can indicate that service managers carrying out Stage 1 investigations have reached a fair and reasonable decision.
- 1.2 The target result for 2016/17 Stage 2 complaints upheld or partially upheld is 15%.
- 1.3 In Q1 the result to date has been 8% which is Green. There are six complaint investigations which have yet to be concluded. The result for 2015/16 was 22%, the direction of travel is therefore positive.
- 1.4 There is no comparator information available from other authorities about the percentage of Stage 2 complaints upheld.

### Commentary:

- 1.5 For complaints investigated at Stage 2 in Q1 2016/17 Customer Feedback Managers have found that Service Managers reached a fair and reasonable decision in more than nine out of ten (92%) of cases compared to four out of five (80%) cases in 2015/16.
- 1.6 Heads of Service tell us that greater effort is being placed on resolving customer dissatisfaction by their managers. To assist in this the Customer Feedback Team offer training in developing investigations skills and identifying service improvement as part of the Council wide learning programme.
- 1.7 Feedback received from delegates who have attended is that it is very informative and useful. This appears to be having a positive effect on the quality of Stage 1 complaints and is reducing the cases upheld at Stage 2.
- 1.8 The challenge for the future will be to continue to improve the skills of all managers and their teams so that people who have raised complaints at Stage 1 can recognise that their issue has been fairly investigated and that they have been treated with empathy and respect. Recognising when something has gone wrong, dealing with it promptly, giving an explanation and a meaningful apology is really important to customers.
- 1.9 Services with higher than the target level of upheld or partially upheld complaints at Stage 2 and where the trend was not improving in Q1 were:
  - Development Control: In Q1 there have been 14 Stage 1 complaints which have resulted in 4 Stage 2 complaints (Escalation rate = 29%). Of those 4 complaints 1 was upheld (25%). By comparison in 2015/16 there were 61 Stage 1 complaints which resulted in 20 Stage 2 complaints (Escalation rate = 33%), of those 20 complaints 3 were upheld (15%).

- Life Events: In Q1 there have been 8 Stage 1 complaints which have resulted in 1 Stage 2 complaint (Escalation rate = 12.5%). The Stage 2 complaint was unusual in that it was referred immediately to Stage 2 at the request of the Head of Service. The complaint was upheld therefore giving a result of 100%. By comparison in 2015/16 there were 23 Stage 1 complaints which resulted in 3 Stage 2 complaints (Escalation rate = 13%), of those 3 complaints 1 was upheld (33%).
- Children's Social Care: In Q1 there have been 15 Stage 1 complaints which have resulted in 2 Stage 2 complaints (Escalation rate = 13%). Of those 2 complaints both were partially upheld (100%). These were complaints carried out under the statutory process and contained many issues. Such complaints will usually have at least one component that is upheld, it would be unusual in Children's Social Care to have a large complaint where no single element was not at least partially upheld.

### **Actions:**

- 1.10 The Customer Feedback Team will continue to provide support, advice and training to enable service managers to give high quality response to complaints which focus on either resolving matters or giving clear explanations why service have to be delivered as they are. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead)
- 1.11 The Customer Feedback Managers will continue to meet with service managers to identify service improvements and to improve the quality of Stage One replies. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead)

## **Appendix 4: Number of Ombudsman complaints upheld**

### **Position**

- 1.1 The target result for 2016/17 for complaints referred to the Ombudsman which are upheld or partially upheld is 20%.
- 1.2 National comparator data for complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman are produced annually in June/July. The LGO's Annual Review of Local Government Complaints shows that it upheld 51% of detailed investigations in 2015/16, up from 46% the previous year.
- 1.3 Over the three year period 2013-16 the percentage of cases where the Ombudsman upheld complaints against the council has consistently decreased from 31% to 22% with an average of 27%.
- 1.4 A Target of 20% for 2016/17 gives a continued improvement in resolving complaints before they are referred to the Ombudsman.
- 1.5 In Q1 the result to date has been 8.3% which is Green. There have been 12 complaints referred to the Ombudsman in the quarter, one complaint resulted in a finding of Maladministration and Injustice. Seven other cases have been concluded with findings of no fault, we are awaiting the results of four more.

### **Commentary**

- 1.6 The case in which the Ombudsman found fault was in Children's Social Care. The Ombudsman was satisfied the Council has identified the full extent of fault involved and offered appropriate remedies, and that the Council had agreed with the Ombudsman's recommendations about implementation of remedy.
- 1.7 The Council has confirmed to the Ombudsman that it has carried out the practice reminders identified during the course of its investigation of the complaints. These included:
  - Remind staff 'to be clear about the origin of material and to ensure that handwritten documentation is scanned to the child's record'.
  - Remind staff to pay due regard to parental commitments when contact arrangements are made.
  - Remind staff of the need to ensure that all people involved in contact are consulted about changes to arrangements

### **Actions:**

- 1.8 The Customer Feedback Team will continue to provide support, advice and assistance to services to enable managers to give high quality responses to the Ombudsman which reflect the service and their attempts to resolve complaints in the best possible light. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead)

- 1.9 Actions identified by the Ombudsman for service improvement will be communicated to the relevant team and will be monitored to ensure they are carried out. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead)

## Appendix 5: Number of Compliments

### Position:

- 1.1 The total number of compliments recorded by the corporate Customer Feedback Team for 2015/16 was 781 which gave a 10% improvement over the green target for that year.
- 1.2 For 2016/17 a 10% improvement for the year is 860 compliments (215 per quarter).
- 1.3 For 2016/17 quarter one there were 213 compliments, this is an Amber rating.
- 1.4 The Customer Feedback Team record compliments from members of the public and from other professionals. By professionals we mean colleagues from other departments and people working in other agencies or partner organisations.
- 1.5 In quarter one 188 (88%) compliments were received from members of the public, and 25 (12%) were from professionals.
- 1.6 By comparison for the whole of 2015/16 that ratio was 656 (84%) from members of the public, and 125 (16%) from professionals.
- 1.7 We record the reasons for compliments. In Q1 the results for compliments from members of the public are set out below with the full figures for 2015/16 alongside for comparative purposes:

<b>Member of Public:</b> Reason for Compliment	Quarter One 2016/17		Whole Year 2015/16	
Customer Focus	89	47%	226	33%
Personal Qualities	40	21%	132	20%
Good Process	33	18%	112	17%
Quality of Outcome	17	9%	107	16%
Quality of Input	9	5%	79	12%

In Q1 the results for compliments from other professionals are:

<b>Other Professionals:</b> Reason for Compliment	Quarter One 2016/17		Whole Year 2015/16	
Customer Focus	10	40%	18	14%
Personal Qualities	4	16%	36	29%
Good Process	2	8%	31	25%
Quality of Outcome	3	12%	10	8%
Quality of Input	6	24%	36	29%

- 1.8 In Q1 the number of compliments received by each Directorate were:
  - Economy, Environment & Culture = 59
  - Families, Children & Learning = 34

- Finance & Resources = 20
- Health & Adult Social Care = 47
- Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing = 46
- Strategy Governance & Law = 8

1.9 There is no comparator information available from other authorities.

**Commentary:**

1.10 Customer Feedback Team published a wave story to encourage services to report compliments so we can analyse these centrally, and learn from these. Compliments are included in the quarterly discussions between service leads and Customer Feedback Managers to inform service improvements.

1.11 Some service areas have reported a significant increase in the compliments they receive.

- City Infrastructure: have doubled the amount of compliments reported. In 2015/16 they received 40 (that is 10 per quarter), in quarter one of 2016/17 they have reported 20.

Most of the compliments have been about refuse collection or recycling and have referred to the quality of customer focus.

[“What a difference it makes when someone takes a bit pride in the job, today the recycling came and took all the recycling and replaced the boxes tidily and did not leave a load of rubbish all over the place, may be this crew or the supervisor should be used to show other crews how to do the job. And this is Moulsecoomb have we got change on the way. Well done to the crew please pass this on I would much rather pay compliments than have confrontation but I don't get much chance to pay compliments.”]

- Children’s Social Care: have increased the compliments they are reporting four fold. In 2015/16 they reported 14 compliments. In quarter one of 2016/17 they have reported the same number (14).

Compliments received by this service often refer to the professionalism of staff, their friendliness and support they offer.

[“Just wanted to say a big thank you to you all for being so friendly and making contact such a better place when I saw xxxxx. I was meant to be coming to contact Saturday but social have said I can now take xxxxx out on that day unsupervised. He moves home on Monday and is his overnight tomorrow!! So so happy! But just wanted to let u know that I've really enjoyed coming to Hillview because you always made it that bit nicer so thank you Michelle and Colette and Hillview staff and all the lovely supervisors :) ” ]

**Actions:**

1.12 The Customer Feedback Team will continue to encourage and remind teams to send their compliments to CustomerFeedback using the generic email address



as this will enable us to build a picture of what customers find valuable. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead)

1.13 The value of Compliments is promoted in the Complaints Investigation and Service Improvement workshops. (Action Date: Ongoing. Action Lead: Customer Experience Lead)

1.14 The Customer Feedback Team will analyse compliments received and discuss with services leads in quarterly meetings to inform service improvements (Action Date: Ongoing, Action Lead: Customer Feedback Managers)

